

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE B17

THE WASHINGTON POST
9 February 1982

JACK ANDERSON

Moscow Gold: The repression in Poland is proving costly to the Soviet Union. It has been selling gold on the world market to keep the Polish economy afloat, according to intelligence sources. The Afghanistan aggression and domestic production failures have added to the pinch.

"Moscow gold"—a buzzword in the 1930s to explain the subversion of political leaders and parties by the communists—is today a carefully watched yardstick of the Soviet economy's strength or weakness. For this reason, the Russians keep their transactions as secret as possible.

But the CIA is able to glean some nuggets on Soviet gold sales. Witness these excerpts from the agency's top-secret documents:

- "Soviet gold sales were made on the Swiss market and earned Moscow some \$400 million."

- "A 'huge' stock of Soviet gold is reportedly now at the Zurich airport, awaiting sale on the Zurich market."

The commissars are as canny as any capitalists when they market their precious metal, trying to sell when prices high and hold on when prices are low. But the needs of their political adventuring can upset this prudent policy, the CIA reports.

"Moscow increased the volume of sales during periods of rising prices and cut back when prices fell," a top-secret document states. "In the long run, however, Moscow probably will have to sell gold when prices are at or below current levels."